

HOT TOPIC – Week of March 2, 2015

Meeting with the Silverton Town Council to discuss soil sampling in Silverton scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2015

Last April at a meeting with the San Juan County Commissioners, EPA very briefly discussed our concerns with the potential for soil contamination in town due to historical smelting activities. Since then, EPA has had several conversations with Mayor Tookey about meeting with the Silverton Town Council on this subject. Because of internal issues within the town council and a re-call election, there hasn't been an appropriate opportunity until now to meet with the mayor and town council. EPA representatives will be meeting with the town council on Monday, March 23rd to brief the council on our concerns and why soil contamination could be an exposure pathway for the residents of Silverton.

In a Brownfields investigation report (circa 2007-2009) of the Rose Walsh Smelter site in Silverton, lead concentrations at the site ranged from 99 to ~34,000 ppm in the surface soils. Arsenic was also found in concentrations up to 1600 ppm at the Rose Walsh Smelter site. In 2011, CDPHE conducted a cleanup of waste and soils at the Rose Walsh Smelter site under its Voluntary Clean-Up Program (VCUP) due to the risks to human health posed by the high levels of lead and arsenic.

In addition, USGS's report E2 of the professional paper No. 1651 includes aerial analysis of metals concentrations in the historic mining district in and around Town. The results of this imaging show mine waste may have been used on the Town roads. Since most of the streets of Silverton are not paved, this could also be a pathway for exposure.

Finally, some limited soils data presented in a Site Inspection report by CDPHE in 1999 suggested that there may be contaminated soils in Silverton. A soil sample collected during the site inspection showed a lead concentration of 1840 ppm.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- 1) Inform the Town Board and others about proposed EPA activities to investigate potential soil contamination in and around the Town from historical mining-related activities in the area;
- 2) Obtain consent for access from the town board to sample soil in public areas, such as local parks, and from the Silverton School Board for the Silverton School; and
- 3) Gather information about community concerns/interest related to the communications provided above.

Initially, EPA would like to sample public areas in Silverton and provide the sampling results to the town council and community and then with the permission of property owners conduct sampling of residential yards if warranted.

For informational purposes. No action by the RA is necessary.

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